

Informal Question and Answer Section (contd); TLG-0001

1 audiences much more than you: no threatening,
2 shouting, profanity. This stuff happens.
3 Finger pointing, or name calling. Any
4 questions about how to do formal comment?

5 All right. Is there anybody who
6 would like to give comment who has obligations
7 at home? Sir, come on up.

8 **TLG-0001** MR. BRIAN KELLY: My name is
9 Brian Kelly. I live here in La Grande. My
10 comments are pretty short and to the point.

11 But I guess the credibility question
12 that I have is: Right now at Hanford we have
13 this really huge environmental problem. And
14 like the gentleman mentioned earlier, it's
15 supposed to be cleaned up.

16 And I just don't see the wisdom in
17 adding to the problem until we get a handle on
18 the problem we already have.

19 The other thing is we're talking
20 about two of the lifelines to Eastern Oregon:
21 one is the Columbia River, the other is the
22 freeway.

23 And I have a problem messing with
24 either one of them, potentially, in terms of
25 radioactive waste. And that's my comment.

17

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TLG-0002

1 MR. DEE WILLIS: Ken Niles.
 2 **TLG-0002** MR. KEN NILES: Thank you, Dee.
 3 Good evening. My name is Ken Niles. I'm the
 4 assistant director for the Oregon Office of
 5 Energy for Nuclear Safety.

6 I wanted to make a couple of
 7 comments on the record to the Department of
 8 Energy on behalf of the agency. And also I had
 9 a couple of comments I wanted to make on
 10 transportation safety that -- some of the
 11 issues that Gerry brought up.

12 First off, it is a very extensive
 13 document. As you see up there, 3,000 pages;
 14 it's 21 pounds. We are still in the process of
 15 doing our analysis, and we will submit detailed
 16 comments probably just at the comment deadline.

17 We have requested an extension of
 18 the comment deadline. The Umatilla Tribe has
 19 requested an extension. Other entities have
 20 requested extensions. They have all been
 21 turned down.

22 We believe that -- we're
 23 disappointed in this action by the Department
 24 of Energy. It's not Mike's personal choice to
 25 do that, or decision.

18

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TLG-0002 (contd)

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1 We believe the government exists to
2 serve its citizens; and we believe that in this
3 case, the Federal Government through the U.S.
4 Department of Energy is not serving its
5 citizens.

6 We believe that they have instituted
7 artificial deadlines and a false sense of
8 urgency and believe that there is really no
9 legitimate reason why we cannot have an
10 extension. The extension that we've requested.

11 Oregon's congressional delegation is
12 working on a letter. And, Wayne, I don't know
13 if you have an update as to whether that letter
14 has gone out.

15 But I know our congressional
16 delegation is in support of an extension. So
17 we hope that the Department of Energy will
18 reconsider.

2

19 As Dennis mentioned, we also commend
20 the Department of Energy for greatly improving
21 this document. It was a mess a year ago. It
22 frankly did not do what it was supposed to do.

23 And it has come a long way since
24 then. It's still not all the way, and we still
25 have some concerns.

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TLG-0002 (contd)

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1 We don't believe that it's still
2 fully comprehensive in terms of looking at all
3 the impacts from all the historic waste
4 disposal practices that have been going on at
5 Hanford since the early to mid 1940's.

6 We don't believe it takes into
7 account all the different waste streams at
8 Hanford that some of the buried wastes, some of
9 the wastes that will be left in the tanks.

10 And without that, we don't believe
11 there is a comprehensive way to really look at
12 what the impacts are.

13 So without knowing what the impacts
14 have been, we don't believe it's possible to
15 tell what the added increment of impact will
16 be.

17 And we would like to see a more
18 comprehensive, encompassing analysis of what
19 those impacts have been.

4

20 We're troubled by assumptions that
21 the Environmental Impact Statement makes that
22 groundwater at Hanford will eventually be
23 allowed to continue to be contaminated to
24 levels that we consider to be unacceptable.

25 And, again, without knowing what

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TLG-0002 (contd)

4

1 this increment is, we can't tell when we might
2 reach the level of how much more waste can be
3 disposed there safely before you reach these
4 unacceptable levels. So we believe that is a
5 shortcoming as well in the document.

5

6 We're also troubled by the entire
7 process. In 1999, the Federal Government did a
8 national Environmental Impact Statement, they
9 said "Hanford and the Nevada test site are our
10 choices for places to dispose of large amounts
11 of mixed low-level radioactive waste and
12 low-level radioactive waste."

13 And that there would be
14 site-specific analysis to basically affirm that
15 that was the right decision to make.

16 And instead, as we read this, we see
17 that this Environmental Impact Statement
18 doesn't necessarily validate that decision. It
19 assumes that was the correct decision. In
20 making that assumption, then it looks only at
21 disposing of waste at Hanford.

22 We're not naive. We know that there
23 will be additional waste that is disposed at
24 Hanford, both generated on-site, and waste that
25 will come to Hanford.

21

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TLG-0002 (contd)

6

1 And we will clearly, in our written
2 comments, list our expectations for how the
3 Department of Energy should dispose of that
4 waste.

5 We will urge the U.S. Department of
6 Energy to adopt a defense, in-depth system,
7 which must include line disposal trenches,
8 which Mike says they're favoring now; extensive
9 environmental monitoring at the points; and
10 performance criteria for the wasteform, the
11 capping system and the disposal sites.

12 And, again, it's very difficult at
13 this point, given the volume of that document,
14 to make a lot of detailed comments at this
15 point.

16 Dennis said his conclusion at this
17 point that the U.S. Environmental Protection
18 Agency made is that they believe this analysis
19 is good enough for the U.S. Department of
20 Energy to go ahead and make their decisions.

21 We're not to that point yet. We may
22 be by the time we finish our analysis, but
23 we're not to that point yet.

24 I would like to talk briefly about
25 transportation. And actually, Dee, if you'll

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TLG-0002 (contd)

1 permit me, this is more a message for you folks
2 than necessarily for the Department of Energy.

3 Gerry made a lot of comments.
4 There's other that have made a lot of comments.
5 And quite frankly, and Gerry knows this, we
6 don't agree entirely with everything he says.

7 I, for the most part, am the state
8 official that is responsible for the safe
9 transport of radioactive materials through the
10 state of Oregon. And I've been working on this
11 issue since 1992.

12 And the state has been working on it
13 pretty heavily since 1982. That's when we
14 began to institute a permitting process for
15 radioactive material shipments.

16 That's when we began to track the
17 shipments and to try to work with the Federal
18 Government to do some things, to get some
19 safeguards in to make these shipments as safe
20 as we can.

21 I'm going to give you a couple of
22 numbers in a moment. And I think you're going
23 to be surprised by them.

24 But let me also give you the
25 perspective from the state of Oregon, so you

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TLG-0002 (contd)

1 know where I'm coming from when I make these
2 statements.

3 About 20 years ago when the state
4 decided that Hanford cleanup was vital, that it
5 was very important to protect the Columbia
6 River, we did that knowing that cleanup at
7 Hanford will result in an increase of
8 radioactive materials. We knew that would be
9 part of the trade-off for cleanup at Hanford.

10 It doesn't mean we accept tens of
11 thousands of more shipments going to Hanford.
12 It doesn't mean that we accept all of these
13 potential shipments going to Hanford.

14 But what it does mean is the state's
15 official position that the transport of
16 radioactive materials can occur safely if state
17 and Federal regulations are met.

18 And in some cases, with other
19 shipments, some of these transuranic waste
20 shipments, actually all the transuranic waste
21 shipments, other high activity shipments, we
22 asked for the Federal Government to do more
23 than just meet the minimum requirements.

24 And since 1988, Oregon, along with
25 all the western states, have negotiated as a

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TLG-0002 (contd)

1 group with the U.S. Department of Energy.

2 And we have gotten a lot of those
3 commitments for things such as keeping the
4 trucks off the road when the weather is bad and
5 tracking these shipments and requiring the best
6 drivers and the best trucking companies.

7 It doesn't mean it covers all these
8 shipments. It doesn't cover the low-level
9 waste shipments. It does cover the higher
10 activity shipments.

11 Since the state of Oregon began
12 tracking radioactive material shipments through
13 the state, in 1982 we have had about 15,000
14 truckloads of radioactive waste travel through
15 the state.

16 More than half of those on
17 Interstate 84 through your area. And that's a
18 lot of shipments that we've seen in the past.
19 And I would be surprised if any of you had any
20 idea we've seen that level of shipments.

21 In 1982 when we began tracking, we
22 had 2,000 shipments that year. We're down now,
23 and it varies wildly, between 3- to 6- or
24 700 shipments a year. Still going on the
25 freeway.

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TLG-0002 (contd)

1 It's not all connected with the U.S.
2 Department of Energy. There's a commercial
3 low-level waste disposal dump up there as well.

4 15,000 shipments we've had,
5 21 years, we've had seven incidents involving
6 those shipments. One that you would call a
7 pretty serious accident, a rollover. The other
8 pretty minor. In none of those cases did we
9 have a release of radioactive materials.

10 So I just want to give you just a
11 little perspective. We work very closely with
12 the HAZ-MAT teams, the fire departments
13 throughout the state. We're going to go
14 tomorrow and talk to the folks at La Grande as
15 well.

16 We have provided them equipment, we
17 provided them with training, we provided them
18 with shipment information about what's coming
19 up, what they can expect to see.

20 And periodically we call these folks
21 and we say, "Do you have what you need? Do you
22 have the equipment, do you have the
23 information, do you have the training?"

24 And if they say "No," we say "What
25 does it take to get you what you need?" We do

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TLG-0002 (contd); TLG-0003

1 that, and I'm making the commitment we will
2 continue to do that because we do take this
3 seriously.

4 I don't want people to get the
5 thought that these trucks are just driving
6 willy-nilly through the state of Oregon and
7 nobody's looking at them at all.

8 So if there are questions about
9 that, I'm not sure what the format may do a
10 little bit later. Dee said we may get into
11 Q&A. If there are questions about that, I'd be
12 glad to try and answer them. Thank you.

13 MR. DEE WILLIS: Thanks, Ken.

14 So where are you now? Are you
15 bursting with questions? Or are you willing to
16 hear a few more comments before we go to
17 discussion?

18 Let's get a couple more comments.
19 If I read your name and you want to wait and
20 hear more discussion and comment later, just
21 say "pass," okay. Dwight Dill.

22 **TLG-0003** MR. DWIGHT DILL: I'll try and
23 be brief. I'm Dwight Dill from La Grande. I
24 have -- echo a lot of, probably, the same
25 concerns we've heard.

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TLG-0003 (contd)

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1 Interstate 84, as we all know, the
2 two worst portions of Interstate 84 are
3 directly to the east, directly to the west of
4 La Grande. I have concerns that we're looking
5 at year-round shipment of wastes through that
6 area.

7 I travel that highway pretty
8 regularly, several times a month under --
9 year-round, and that's not a road I'd want to
10 be on with those shipments beside me.

2

11 I also have concerns that we're
12 bringing more waste into Hanford when we
13 haven't dealt with the problems that currently
14 exist there.

3

15 There's groundwater contamination,
16 there's contamination in the Columbia River.
17 Columbia River is a vital economic, cultural,
18 and recreational resource for both La Grande --
19 or both Oregon and Washington. Continued
20 contamination of that puts all those activities
21 at risk.

22 I also have concerns that with --
23 I've lost my train of thought, I apologize.
24 But those are my two major concerns.

25 MR. DEE WILLIS: Mark

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TLG-0004

1 Tipperman, did I get that right? Give us your
2 name in your own voice.

3 **TLG-0004** MR. MARK TIPPERMAN: My name,
4 in my own voice, Mark Tipperman. I'll also be
5 brief. And the main reason I'm going to be
6 brief is that there just really wasn't enough
7 time to get prepared for this meeting. I only
8 learned of it in the last few days.

9 Certainly I didn't have time to read
10 through all 3,000 pages, or even get a good
11 summary or a set of bullet points. So for
12 those reasons, I'm going to be brief.

13 And my first gripe is that the
14 comment period for this EIS and the
15 distribution of the revised EIS and notice of
16 this meeting, I think was truly inadequate.
17 And I think that without adequate comment, it
18 makes a mockery of the NEPA process.

19 And so I would certainly commend
20 additional time for this purpose. And I would
21 hope that the DOE would change its position on
22 that.

23 My second thing is just really a
24 reflection. Something I observed the other
25 day. I was watching CNN.

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TLG-0004 (contd)

1 And they had a picture of some
2 55 gallon metal drums outside a facility of
3 some kind in Iraq. And the description was
4 that these were some of the drums that
5 contained radioactive water from some kind of
6 nuclear facility in Iraq and how people in the
7 area had carted off these drums to use in their
8 homes.

9 And I said to myself, initially,
10 "Wow, look at that. Look how backwards they
11 are. Look at all these hazards that they seem
12 to have no way of containing."

13 And then I thought, as this meeting
14 came up, "We're really not much further
15 advanced. We're really not much further along
16 than they are."

17 We have all kinds of assumptions
18 about how our technology and our models and our
19 sciences, if going to provide us with an
20 answer -- with a magic bullet. But really the
21 problem of nuclear material is one that, at
22 least at this point, is insurmountable.

23 We have an industry, we have a
24 government agency that generates nuclear waste
25 and hazardous waste on a scale that certainly

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TLG-0004 (contd)

2

1 we're in no position to deal with and haven't
2 demonstrated by anything we've done in the
3 past, and ability to deal with in the future.

4 So I would echo what other people
5 have said, which is: Until we know that we
6 actually can deal with the waste that we have
7 there, and we can deal with it in a way where
8 conditions don't get worse but actually
9 improve, we shouldn't be accepting any more
10 waste.

11 And I can't say exactly what's in
12 that revised EIS, but I don't understand how
13 DOE can propose to go forward with this
14 addressing the impacts that have been brought
15 to bear upon the fisheries downstream and the
16 recreational users downstream, when I don't
17 think they're really aware of what those
18 impacts are.

3

19 And certainly from what I've read in
20 the summary, there doesn't seem to be even a
21 proposal under consideration that would
22 adequately address the water quality impacts
23 from what they're proposing to do with
24 monitoring stations located a mile away from
25 the sites at which they plan disposal.

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TLG-0004 (contd); TLG-0005

3

1 I'm hard pressed to see how that can
2 give an accurate picture of what's actually
3 leaching through the ground and into the
4 environment.

5 Because as we know, much of this
6 waste has a lifespan that extends many, even
7 hundreds, of generations from today. And we
8 have to look at this from a really long-term
9 perspective that we don't have to examine some
10 of our other concerns. Thank you.

11 MR. DEE WILLIS: Sandra Roth.

12 **TLG-0005** MS. SANDRA ROTH: Sandra Roth.
13 I'm going to keep it real short. I haven't had
14 a chance at all to see the EIS.

15 Shelley and I work together every
16 day. And I've heard tons of information about
17 it, so I'm here to speak.

1

18 I just want to let you know, Hanford
19 has enough. It's got so much stuff up there
20 and we can't deal with what we have. And why
21 are we adding more?

22 And after hearing this on a
23 day-to-day saga, I can tell you that we need to
24 deal with what we have.

25 MR. DEE WILLIS: Owen Kenton.

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